

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM**



**Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area  
FY 2009 Manager's Report**

Introduction

- Unit: **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area  
Red Rock/Sloan Field Office  
Southern Nevada District Office  
BLM Nevada State Office**

- Contact Information: **HCR 33 Box 5500  
Las Vegas, NV 89161  
702 515-5350**

**[www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm\\_programs/blm\\_special\\_areas/red\\_rock\\_nca.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm_programs/blm_special_areas/red_rock_nca.html)**

- Manager: **Mark Tanaka-Sanders  
Mark\_Tanaka-Sanders@blm.gov**
- Established: **Public Law 101-621, Public Law 105-26, November 16, 1990**
- Acreage: **197,382 BLM acres**
- Annual visitation:

Body

Please report on and briefly describe the following:



## **1. Natural and Heritage Resources Conditions**

- a. Natural resources trends.
  - i. Describe overall upland, riparian, biological diversity, special status species, air and water, and other natural resources trends.
  - ii. Describe notable issues or trends involving invasive, non-native, or noxious weeds.

**RRCNCA does not yet have any natural resource specialists on staff. Some work is being proposed or conducted through cooperative efforts of Universities and students.**





- b. Heritage resources trends.
  - i. Describe the overall condition of the unit's cultural and paleontological, wild and scenic rivers, national trails, and other heritage resources.

**RRCNCA utilizes the services and expertise of an Archeologist and some student employees from the RR/Sloan Field Office for archeological and paleontological advice, inventory and monitoring along with a contingent of volunteer site stewards. Graffiti is one of the most pervasive of the threats to both the scenic and cultural resources of the NCA. Tagging, carving, painting and other means of defacing prehistoric pictographs and geological features (as well as upon the built environment such as toilets and signs) continues to be reported by stewards and volunteer graffiti removal projects continue throughout the year. Rock climbers continue to need contact and education (and sometimes law enforcement) to keep their activities from damaging rock art on their climbing routes. Recreationists continue to need contact and education on the threats their activities represent to cultural features such as petroglyphs and rock structures and open cooking pits. We are still in need of some redesign and reemphasis to divert recreational activities away from now know cultural features and ensure that future development stay clear of archeological sites and where possible built structures such as trails, roads, parking lots and picnic facilities be removed and relocated from cultural features already impacted. A National Historic Trail was identified**



**and Interpreted this year by installation of two large wayside exhibits featuring different parts of the story of the Old Spanish Trail. An alternate route of this trail went through what is now the RRCNCA and at two parking/trailhead areas exhibits were installed that coincide with others outside the NCA that inform travelers and history buffs about the Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail and its significance to SW heritage.**

The trends on the Red Rock Canyon NCA are reflected insite steward reports. Please note that typically three to five sites may be included in any given monitoring unit.

**CULTURAL SITE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM  
RED ROCK CANYON NCA  
FYE 2008, 2009**

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Site Monitoring Units	17	24
Site Stewards Assigned	31	39
Hours donated	514	463
Impact Reports Filed	14	15

Trends:

**RED ROCK CANYON PERCENTAGE AS  
OF TOTAL IMPACT IN CLARK COUNTY ON BLM**

GRAFFITI	38%
OHV RELATED	17%
VANDALISM	4%
SIGN DESTRUCTION	16%
BULLET DAMAGE	4%
EXCESS TRASH	5%
POTTING/DIGGING	1%
OTHER	7%

c. Cutlural inventory of approximately 5,000 acres of the NCA is anticipated in 2010, based on SNPLMA funding approved in 2009. In 2009, a literature review and file search was completed, which revealed the presence of 251 known sites, some of which were not subject to formal recording efforts until 2009. This effort was conducted under the Interagency Site Stewardship program in concert with the RRC Cultural Volunteer Team. (Note that the RRC Cultural Team logged as of 2009 about 3,000 volunteer hours recording, or re-recording these poorly documented rock art sites on the NCA.) A complete site condition assessment of the RRC NCA is also anticipated to begin 2010, and to be completed by 2012. During 2009, no significant threats or changes in site conditions were reported.

In addition to their responsibilities monitoring cultural sites, site stewards have also assisted with the reporting of impacts to other kinds of resources; e.g. natural resources, and health and safety

issues, such as illegal dumping of hazardous waste materials on public lands administered by the BLM. SHPO is also a working partner under the site stewardship program, which is essential to tracking, reporting and analyzing general and specific trends on the RRC NCA. This program provides for the continued recruitment and retention of volunteers and assists with promoting responsible use of federal lands through on-the-ground education of the members of the public. The program also offers opportunities for cultural stewards, both interagency and RRC Cultural Team volunteers, to participate in community and public environmental education programs, which are currently being developed under other SNPLMA-funded Cooperative Conservation Initiatives, particularly the Wilderness program.

Volunteers that have assisted with the administration of the cultural resources on Sloan have been drawn from groups such as the Friends of Red Rock, the Red Rock Interpretive Association, Archaeo-Nevada Society, Nevada Archaeological Society, the Southern Nevada Rock Art Association, and the Nevada Rock Art Foundation. Non-federal partners include Clark County Wetlands, Nevada State SHPO office, the Clark County Commissioners, the City of Las Vegas, Summerlin Master Planned Community, and citizens of Blue Diamond. In addition, the College of Southern Nevada has begun to assist with the site documentation that will begin in earnest in 2010.

c. Land Health Assessments.

- ii. Report the percent of the unit's acreage that has been assessed using land health standards, and percent of assessed acreage meeting standards.
- iii. Report annual accomplishments toward assessing and meeting land health standards.

**RRCNCA does not currently have any natural resource staff or programs assigned directly to the NCA. As a Conservation Area, the unit is not managed for grazing purposes but is allowed to continue natural processes while minimizing human caused impacts from fire and recreational uses.**





d.Inventory. Describe work done to create and maintain natural and heritage resource inventories.

See Site Stewardship information above

e.Restoration. Describe notable restoration projects undertaken during the year including acres treated. Indicate whether restoration projects were initiated, continued, or completed. Restoration should be interpreted broadly to include removal of invasive species, stabilization of erosion-prone soils, replanting of native grasses, reintroduction of key species, rehabilitation of primary ecosystem processes, and watershed restoration.

**There is currently a fire rehab project occurring right off the scenic loop from the most recent fire we had in FY2007.**

**In addition, Friends of Red Rock have numerous volunteer events throughout the year. Many of these events involve working w/ the Lead Outdoor Recreation Planner to restore and revegetate areas that have previously been disturbed.**



## **2. Recreation Facilities, Roads, and Trails Conditions**

### **a. Overview.**

- i. Describe overall condition of physical facilities, including roads and trails.**

**State routes 156, 158, 159 and 160 go thru the NCA to other areas, mostly within the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area adjacent to the NCA. These state rights of way are currently maintained by the Nevada Department of Transportation and are in good condition.**



**An interpretive auto route known as the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Drive is a BLM National Scenic Backcountry Byway and traverses approximately 12 miles of Mohave Desert terrain with trailheads, scenic overlooks and picnic facilities along its route. This route is entirely under BLM management and is in fair to poor condition. It is failing in several locations where shoulders are non-existent and pavement is falling down the hillsides. The parking lots associated with the Scenic Drive are wholly inadequate for the traffic volume, vehicle sizes and frequency of use of this millennium. The drive and its amenities were constructed when NCA visitation was 20,000 people per year. The NCA is presently nearly 200,000 thousand acres and receives over 1 Million people per year in the scenic drive area alone. An alternative transportation feasibility review was made a few years ago and made some good recommendations including development of an ATP and seasonal shuttle services however no funding currently exists for these facilities and services.**





**The NCA has more than 100 miles of trails of various standards for hikers, rock climbers, horse riders, & mountain bicyclists. Locations of many are still being inventoried and GPS'd and determinations must yet be made on many as to whether they will be**

**designated, closed, rerouted or changed. Many trails are remnants of cattle ranching activities and recreational routes pre-dating the establishment of the NCA. Some new trails are being proposed and studied such as a Multiple use Bicycle trail connecting the Summerlin neighborhoods on the**



**NCA's eastern boundary through the NCA paralleling route 159 to a possible connection with the Mountain's Edge communities at our SE border. A preproposal planning project is also underway for a trail plan of the North Unit of the NCA in the lands between routes 156 and 158. Since the NCA has no on-site maintenance staff, any road or trail work is done by volunteers or contractors with the assistance of a roadgrader and frontend loader purchased partially by the NCA and shared with the SNDO Support Services Div. Operations Maintenance staff. A revised Table of Organization has been submitted to District and State office management for consideration of creating maintenance positions at Red Rock Canyon**



**for roads and trails maintenance as well as general facility upkeep of the new SNPLMA funded Headquarters and Visitor Center complex.**

- ii. Report percent of assets included in an Asset Business Plan. Please see the BLM Asset Management Plan (March 2009) for more information.
- iii. Report percent of assets in each Asset Priority Index/Facility Condition Index quadrant.

**Operational maintenance and facility asset management have historically been accomplished with use of District staff for design, installation and maintenance of all features of the built environment and infrastructure, &/or done piecemeal and often out of spec and on a shoestring without consistent design or connectivity to other facilities via local staff and credit cards. This type of construction resulted in many delays and corrective actions being required in the current remodel of old facilities and building the new Visitor Center complex. It was found, for example, that the fire suppression system could not be connected to the**



**water supply line shown on the facility drawings because the pipeline supplying the contact station was not actually PVC water pipe but “Driscall” thin walled irrigation tubing laying uncovered on the ground and could not be pressurized. Many cases of water and electric conduit being buried in the same trench without covering, grounding, marker tape, sand fill or other warning to trenchers and tractor operators and conduits laid in sites other than as labeled in the as-built drawings. Current District and NCA management are taking steps to insure that future infrastructure is designed holistically and is compatible with other facilities and code and state and health requirements and do not perpetuate the band-aid approach to facility design,**

**construction, maintenance and operation.**

- b. Construction.  
Describe any new or ongoing construction.





While staff and visitors are housed in temporary construction trailers, construction of the new Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center continues throughout FY09 and into FY10 with expected grand opening on April 10, 2010. Remodeling of the old visitor center into the new NCA Headquarters and Administration building proceeded through FY09. Construction of the trailhead and parking area with restroom and horse trailer area was completed in FY09 at the new Blackvelvet Trailhead area in the South Unit of the

**NCA. Construction and installation of wayside exhibits were completed in FY 09 at the RRC Scenic Overlook parking facility and the Blackvelvet Trailhead parking area.**

- c. Maintenance. Describe the unit's deferred maintenance backlog (as reflected in the 5 Year Plan), and whether annual maintenance is meeting the needs of the BLM and the unit's users.

**The NCA unit does not have a separate 5 year plan or backlog inventory. Maintenance of the NCA along with other features has been a function of District personnel and not under NLCS/NCA or Field Office direction.**

**Maintenance has historically been managed and directed by District staff rather than NCA staff and there are no on-site maintenance staffers in FY09. Revised TOs have been submitted to District and SO for approval of some on-NCA operational and facility maintenance staff. A new maintenance worker was approved for RRCNCA by the state PMC but is yet unfilled.**

- d. Signage.
  - i. Briefly describe the unit's sign plan and whether it is approved, pending, initiated, or other.

**A sign plan has been written by the District Support Services Division operations staff lead.**

**NCA staff are attempting to assume more of the responsibility, as vacancies are filled, to maintain NCA facilities and keep a consistent design style and quality to the built environment. An assignment in FY10 has been made to the NCA's collateral duty facilities manager (an interim assignment of duties to the campground manager/ORP) to complete a photographic/GPS sign inventory of the NCA with recommendations of replacement cycles and needs for addition or removal of signs.**



It has been observed that some signs do not meet current standards, are inconsistent in working and style throughout the unit and some are so faded and worn that the message can no longer be read. The NCA Manager developed a computer template for temporary signs that would bring consistency for short term announcement a interpretive program notices that incorporates BLM sign manual and logo standards and place a unit-wide ban on further use of tape on windows, signs or other structures. Portal signs have been designed. Trailhead and facility marker signs have been designed and are in the process of being purchased to replace non-standard signs throughout the NCA. Additionally a design standard was settled upon to insure that all future and replacement fences, posts, markers, traffic control devices and other boundary markers are uniform throughout the NCA.

- ii. Discuss whether installed portal signs or kiosks meet BLM standards described in the 2004 BLM Sign Manual (Bureau Manual 9130).

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area presently has two sites where large stones with the name of the NCA have been erected outside the State Highway right of way. At this time the NCA does not have any of the official BLM portal signs or kiosks. The approximately 18 entrances to the NCA are currently unmarked and the NCA is unadvertised. A BLM standard sign meeting all Sign Manual requirements is installed within the first mile of the RRC Scenic Drive Backcountry Byway.



In the southern end of the NCA many people currently drive through the NCA to the National Forest or other units without knowing they were in the NCA or a NLCS unit. Signs have been designed and Nevada Department of Transportation right of way permits prepared along with NEPA clearances. SNPLMA funding was requested and appropriated in FY09 for portal signs meeting the current BLM sign standards but as of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY10 the funds have not been released for sign purchase.

### **3. Outreach, Environmental Education, Interpretation, and Volunteers**

- a. Outreach. Include a brief narrative about public contacts made in person and through print media, World Wide Web, facilities, signs, kiosks, and other modes of communication and interaction.

RRCNCA contacts each visitor to the Red Rock Canyon Scenic Backcountry Byway and the Visitor Center complex at a multiple booth entrance station where a fee is charged and a newspaper with NLCS/NCA information and safety and orientation material is presented to each vehicle. Dozens of wayside exhibits, bulletin boards, directional and interpretive signs, site bulletins and topic specific trail brochures and other literature are available for visitors

and school groups through the NCA's ranger naturalist staff. Our website contains basic BLM messaging in standard government black and white text but is old fashioned and out of style which severely limits its usefulness to the traveling public. No accurate maps or orientation information, photographs, videos or other modern technology exists on the current site and although no counter function is attached to the site to monitor "hits", it appears from anecdotal information that most people gravitate to the websites of our partners or private travel sites to obtain information on RRC.

b. Visitor centers. Briefly describe activity at any visitor centers associated with the unit. **RRCNCA has a Visitor Center. It was operated out of an old building during early portion of FY09 and later in a modular trailer during construction of a new Visitor Center. The VC contained exhibits on NCA natural and cultural resources, an information desk, book and educational gift sales, and live animal displays.**

c. Environmental education. Describe products and services being delivered (both off-site and on-site) for local and regional K-12 educational institutions. Include pictures of environmental education activities if available.

**RRCNCA has an active EE program with a teacher's training and certification program, school visits to the NCA coordinated through the (currently vacant) BLM EE specialist and in school programs provided by our cooperating association, the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association. Curriculum is established for both the teacher training and the student learning modules. This is planned to be greatly expanded in FY10 and beyond with the construction of the Mohave Discovery Center for Environmental Education.**

d. Interpretation.

i. Provide a brief overview of the main messages being delivered.

**Messages include "who we are", the NLCS, stewardship, resource conservation, safety, responsible recreational uses in an NCA/Monument as compared to a Recreation Area or other types of public lands and parks, topical subjects such as certain species or cultural features of RRC and our role as an agency and the visitor's role at the long term owner of the lands to develop a stewardship ethic in the conservation of these resources.**

ii. Provide an overview of participation by the visiting public in the unit's interpretive program.

**The public(s) who participate in our programs vary from school groups off and on site, tourists to Las Vegas who find us, commercial tours, climbers who come for the rocks, campers, drivers/ bicyclists/motorcyclists/joggers out for a day with nice scenery who are accessing either a formal interpretive program delivered by a ranger naturalist or coming into contact with our exhibits located throughout the trailheads and scenic overlooks and vehicle pullouts in the NCA.**

e. Volunteers. Describe volunteer projects and outcomes. Include number of volunteers, hours, and seasons of operation.

**RRCNCA had 27,533 volunteer hours reported in FY09. The RRC Volunteer program is administered by a ranger naturalist with the assistance of staff from the Friends of Red Rock**



**Canyon and operates year round. Several large work days and many day to day projects, graffiti removal, trail maintenance, archeological site stewards, campground hosts, docents, etc. make the NCA work and accessible to the public.**

- f. Describe other outreach efforts, if applicable.

#### **4. Science**

Many of the 1150 environmental education programs that are given each year incorporate science into the presentation. Also, many of the new exhibits in the visitor center are geared to make the visitor more aware of the natural sciences.

#### **5. Partnerships**

- a. Provide a brief overview of the partnership activities related to the NM or NCA. Briefly describe major partnerships, major partnership projects, and, where they have been identified, partnership goals and objectives. Include collaborative efforts with other government entities as well as non-government entities. The BLM defines partnerships as voluntary and mutually beneficial collaborative relationships between two or more partners, built on the contribution of each party, and formed to achieve or to assist in moving toward a common goal. A partnership may involve one partner utilizing another partner's unique abilities, equipment, services, or resources. A partnership may also involve sharing of resources such as time, funds, knowledge, or equipment.

**RRCNCA's major partnerships continue to be: 1) our cooperating association, the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association which operates a book and gift shop in the Visitor Center, employs Interpretive Naturalists who conduct talks, hikes and other on and off-site interpretive activities on behalf of the NCA in concert with the BLM Visitor Center Manager's staff. And 2) our friends group, the Friends of Red Rock Canyon who provide thousands of hours of volunteer labor and help with projects such as clean up events and work days and trail building and graffiti removal as well as contributing to specific fundraising needs identified with the NCA Manager and the Friends' Executive Director and Board.**

- b. Provide photographs of people involved in partnership projects, including employees, partners, children/youth, and volunteers.

**Photographs are not permitted in the limited download capabilities of the Lotus Notes and remote computer lines to RRCNCA. Photos exist on the network of the SNDO.**

#### **6. Planning and Business Practices**

- a. Planning. Describe the status of the unit's land use plan as of 9/30/09, and the status of that land use plan's implementation strategy, including implementation strategy workshops, spreadsheets, and communications strategies. Refer to WO-IM-2008-041 for more information on implementation strategies. Also describe all activity level planning efforts, including travel and transportation plans.

**A General Management Plan was completed for RRCNCA in 2001. A draft Business Plan is underway in FY09. Several pre-proposal project plans are underway for potential additional trails and trail systems that might connect to county and local trails. An Interpretive Plan & Prospectus is planned for FY10.**

- b. Inholdings were acquired within the NCA but no new units were established at RRCNCA.
- c. RRCNCA did not receive any ARRA or stimulus money in FY09.
- d. See NCA spreadsheets for budget information.

## **7. Manager's Corner**

Include other major or unique items the unit's manager deems worthy of discussion. Managers may include this section at their discretion to describe unique challenges faced, alternative management techniques employed, and synergistic outcomes achieved.

**Most of FY09 has been consumed with the on-going construction of a new visitor center, headquarters/admin building, planning for a new Environmental Ed facility, preparing a Business Plan and Fee proposal, basic planning needed for long term management of trails and facilities, and restructuring staffing assignments within the vacancies and limitations of position types assigned to the NCA. With the staff being housed in temporary trailers (including operating a temporary trailer visitor center for much of the year) or off-site at the District Office all year there were some physical limitations to creation of more effective work teams and distribution of assignments.**

**RRCNCA is at a point where a strong desire on the part of our neighbors, constituents, partners, user groups, & employees, for conservation and protection of their chosen NLCS Unit, adjacent to one of the most dynamic urban areas in America, along with new state of the art facilities, and a recommitment to the mandates of Red Rock's enabling legislation; and interest in the unit by social and political observers; has positioned people and resources to make great strides in the long term conservation and use and appreciation of this portion of the Mohave desert and its natural and cultural and inspirational treasures for future generations.**

